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**January 8, 2004
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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IRS EMPLOYEE INDICTED FOR WITNESS TAMPERING, FRAUD

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that an Internal Revenue Service employee, Antoinette Phillips, age 42, of Baltimore, Maryland was indicted by a federal grand jury today. The six-count indictment charges Phillips with conspiracy to defraud the United States, conspiracy to commit identity theft, witness tampering, and the unauthorized inspection of income tax return information.

The arrest was the result of a criminal investigation which began after investigators discovered that Phillips had made unauthorized entries into the IRS database containing confidential taxpayer information on several occasions from about March 29, 2000 through July 17, 2003. After obtaining confidential information about the father of one of her children, Phillips is alleged to have conspired to submit fraudulent federal income tax returns which generated refunds for three tax years totaling in excess of \$7,000, which were then diverted through the Baltimore City Child Support Enforcement Office to Phillips. Phillips is also charged with witness tampering after she

told one witness to lie to investigators about Phillips' role in preparing fraudulent returns.

If convicted, Phillips faces sentences of up to 5 years on the fraud charge, up to 15 years on the identity theft charge and a \$250,000 fine. In addition, Phillips faces a potential sentence of up to 10 years and a \$250,000 fine on the witness tampering charge and up to one year, a \$1,000 fine and dismissal from federal employment on the charge of unauthorized access of income tax return information..

An indictment/complaint is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The case was investigated by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Donna C. Sanger.